



# The IGUANA



June 14, 2002 Volume 14, No. 11

## Happy 227th Birthday, Army

*The following is a joint message from the Honorable Thomas E. White, Secretary of the Army, and General Eric K. Shinkseki, Army Chief of Staff; for all army activities and Army family members:*

### —ARMY BIRTHDAY 2002—

For 227 years now, soldiers have defended freedom. And again today, soldiers are fighting on behalf of the American people as we prosecute the War on Terrorism.

So as we celebrate the Army's birthday and reflect on our great institution, a simple truth arises: there is no greater profession than the profession of arms and no greater job than ours – serving on point for our nation. Thanks to American soldiers, freedom's light shines as a beacon throughout the world.

The Army has courageously fought our country's wars and served honorably in peace for over two and a quarter centuries. We can all be justifiably proud of the Army's achievements – a distinguished history of service to the nation.

From our victories in the American Revolution through the trial of our Civil War, from the trenches of World War I to the beaches of Normandy and the island battles in the Pacific of World War II, from the frozen mountains of Korea to the sweltering paddies of Vietnam, from Grenada and Panama to the sands of Kuwait and Iraq, and now on the



plains and in the mountains of Afghanistan, soldiers have marched at the van of democracy and the cause of liberty.

And throughout that history of service, the key to the Army's success is our flexibility and willingness to change, to meet the world as it is – without altering the core competencies that make the Army the best fighting force in the world. You are the best army in the world.

As we forge ahead to gain irreversible momentum in our transformation, you will continue to be respected by our allies, feared by our enemies and honored and esteemed by the American people. Your courage, dedication to duty and selfless service to the nation are the hallmarks of the soldiers of the United States Army.

We will never be able to tell you enough how very proud we are of you, how everyone we meet offers their thanks for what you do and their prayers for your safety and well-being.

So we are honored to join you in celebrating the birthday of the most powerful land force the world has ever known. Thank you for your service, for your sacrifices and for your abiding devotion to something greater than self.

God bless each and every one of you and your families, God bless our magnificent Army, and God bless America.

## Army MPs take over for JSF Marines

By Spc. M. William Petersen  
Editor

The responsibility of ensuring force protection for Joint Task Force-Bravo is no small task. In a ceremony at the Soto Cano fire station May 29, that responsibility changed hands.

Maj. Leonard Grassley, former commander of Joint Security Forces, passed the guidon to Maj. Tracey M. Meck, the new commander of JSF.

Meck comes to Soto Cano after commanding 56th Security Forces Squadron, Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. While commanding 56th Security Forces Squadron, Meck's unit was selected as Air Education and Training Command's 2001 Outstanding Active Duty Medium Security Forces Unit.

Along with a new commander came new military police. The Marine MPs turned their brassards over to their successors, 4th Platoon, 978th MP Company. Known as the "Punishers," the MPs come to Soto Cano from Fort Bliss, Texas, as part of 76th MP Battalion, a provisional battalion.

The Punishers are no stranger to Soto Cano. The unit has been doing rotations to JTF-B for several years, according to 1st Lt. Ronaldo Cabales, JSF deputy commander.

"There are only a few MPs who have been here before," said Cabales. "For the rest of the platoon, it's

their first time in Central America and their first time serving in a joint environment."

Cabales sees new environment and an unfamiliar working relationship with Air Force personnel as an opportunity rather than a challenge.

"It's a great opportunity for [4th Plt.] to get joint service experience. They'll get to take advantage of their time and share with the Air Force how we operate, as well as seeing how they operate."

"There are things that we do that work well and things that they do that work well," said Staff Sgt. Ralph Hudson, second squad leader for the Punishers. "We're trying to find cohesion and a happy medium."

Prior to their arrival at Soto Cano, 4th Plt. had only a month together to train. Pulling soldiers from other platoons, the 30 MPs trained in counter-terrorism, country briefings, preventive medicine, drown-proofing, weapons qualification and more.

"In that month's timeframe, we got everybody trained and ready to deploy," said Cabales. "We hope to set a new standard for conducting joint force protection with the Hondurans, as well as exceeding the standards expected of us."

Right: Maj. Tracey M. Meck, JSF commander (right), receives the JSF guidon from Col. Michael Okita, JTF-Bravo commander, at a Change of Command ceremony at the fire station May 29. Meck commands a group of Army military police that arrived the same day.



# Commanders Corner

*Watch what you're saying, someone is listening!*

**By 2nd Lt. Alysia Harvey**

*Courtesy of Air Combat Command  
News Service*

Did you know that a simple phone conversation with your loved one in a deployed location could put him or her in danger?

When you send e-mails or faxes or have a phone conversation, did you know a spy or terrorist could be listening? Even when you are on a government computer or a DSN line?

"Everyone wants to know what you are talking about," said Tech. Sgt. Paul Farrington, the 347th Rescue Wing telephone control officer.

DSN circuits connect through commercial sectors, so conversations can be heard by anyone with a scanner.

"We need to get back to the basics of disclosing information on a need-to-know basis only and think about communication security," Farrington said.

Communication security is making sure what you say can be said, and it is important for everyone to always think about what they are saying before they say it, Farrington said.

Everyone is affected by one person's negligence of communication security. Terrorists and spies can use bits of information from several people and build on them.

For example, Mr. Smith gets a call from his spouse, Lieutenant Smith, who is deployed. She tells him about a dust storm last night. A terrorist or spy listening to the conversation with a scanner can go online

and search for all the places in the world where dust storms occurred and narrow it down to certain locations.

Airman Jones then talks to her husband on a DSN line and tells him she just found out she is deploying to an undisclosed location in a week.

Captain Johnson faxes Airman Jones' orders to Lieutenant Smith at the "undisclosed location" via an unsecured fax.

Sally Spy or Terry Terrorist, who has been tracking these conversations using a facsimile scanner, starts to plan the attack. Sally or Terry gets a copy of the orders using the same scanner, whites out the original name, types in a new name, then calls Lieutenant Smith to inform her of the changes. Smith approves the changes, sends the information to the gate guard and requests there be a pass ready for the newcomer. Then it is instant access

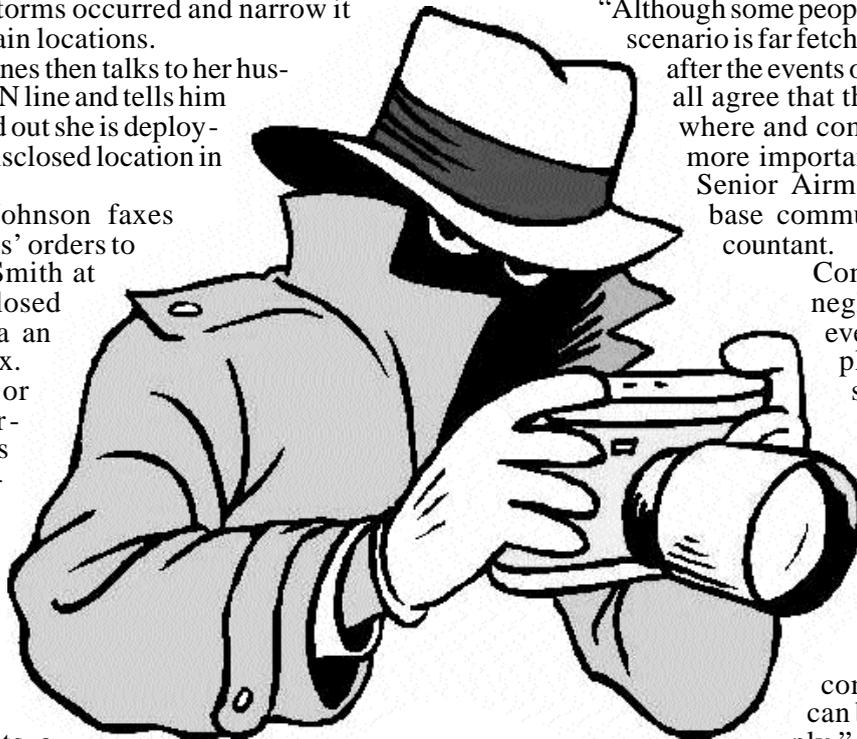
to the base for Sally Spy or Terry Terrorist.

"Although some people probably think that the scenario is far fetched and just a scare tactic, after the events of Sept. 11, I think we can all agree that the enemy could be anywhere and communication security is more important now than ever," said Senior Airman Danielle Davis, the base communications security accountant.

Communication security negligence happens in everyday situations. Examples include people not setting passwords for voicemail systems; leaving classified material in common areas; or chatting in restaurants, bars, beauty salons, the grocery store or any well-frequented place.

"The importance of communication security can be summed up very simply," Davis said. "You're the one who's going to war and getting shot at. Do you really want the enemy to know where you are or what you're doing?"

*(Editor's Note: 2nd Lt. Harvey is part of the 347th Rescue Wing Public Affairs Office at Moody Air Force Base, Ga.)*



## The Chaplain's Corner

### Trivia

**By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Gary A. Pendrak**

*JTF-Bravo Chaplain*

I use to have this thing for trivia.

I guess it started when I was a cadet at Virginia Tech. Freshman cadets had to learn all sorts of meaningless details, along with some important stuff.

When I came into the Army, the quest for trivia continued. "How many panels and gores in a T-10 parachute?"

Here is my favorite trivia question: "What flag is flown by U.S. military forces above the American flag: when and where, and not including the United Nations flag?"

Down through the centuries, many foolish questions about religious matters have been debated. And they have usually generated more heat than light!

Some issues were so trivial that it's hard to imagine anyone taking them seriously. For example:

- What shape are the Archangel Gabriel's wings?
- Are there any angels with baritone voices?
- Did Pilate use soap when washing his hands?
- Could Christ have changed into a devil or a pumpkin?
- How much wine did the guests drink at the mar-

riage in Cana?

• Can an egg laid on a festival day be eaten?

We may find it hard to believe that people would waste time and energy on such nonessentials. But don't we sometimes find it easy to get involved in discussions on similar controversial matters not mentioned in the Bible?

Religious arguments over such issues are speculative and do not edify. They usually create division among believers and encourage conflict, ill will, and pride.

I was told that more churches split based on what color carpet should be installed, than any matters of faith or theology.

Let's beware of foolish questions that generate strife. Trivia can be a lot of fun, but not when it generates divisions.

When it comes to religion, let's focus on what really matters - telling others about the Lord and how to become more like Him. And more important than telling them is showing them God's love through our actions.

And the flag question? It should be an easy one for Navy folks.

It's the Chaplain's flag, flown above the American flag by ships at sea while conducting worship services.

The

# IGUANA

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# The battle of Takur Ghar

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

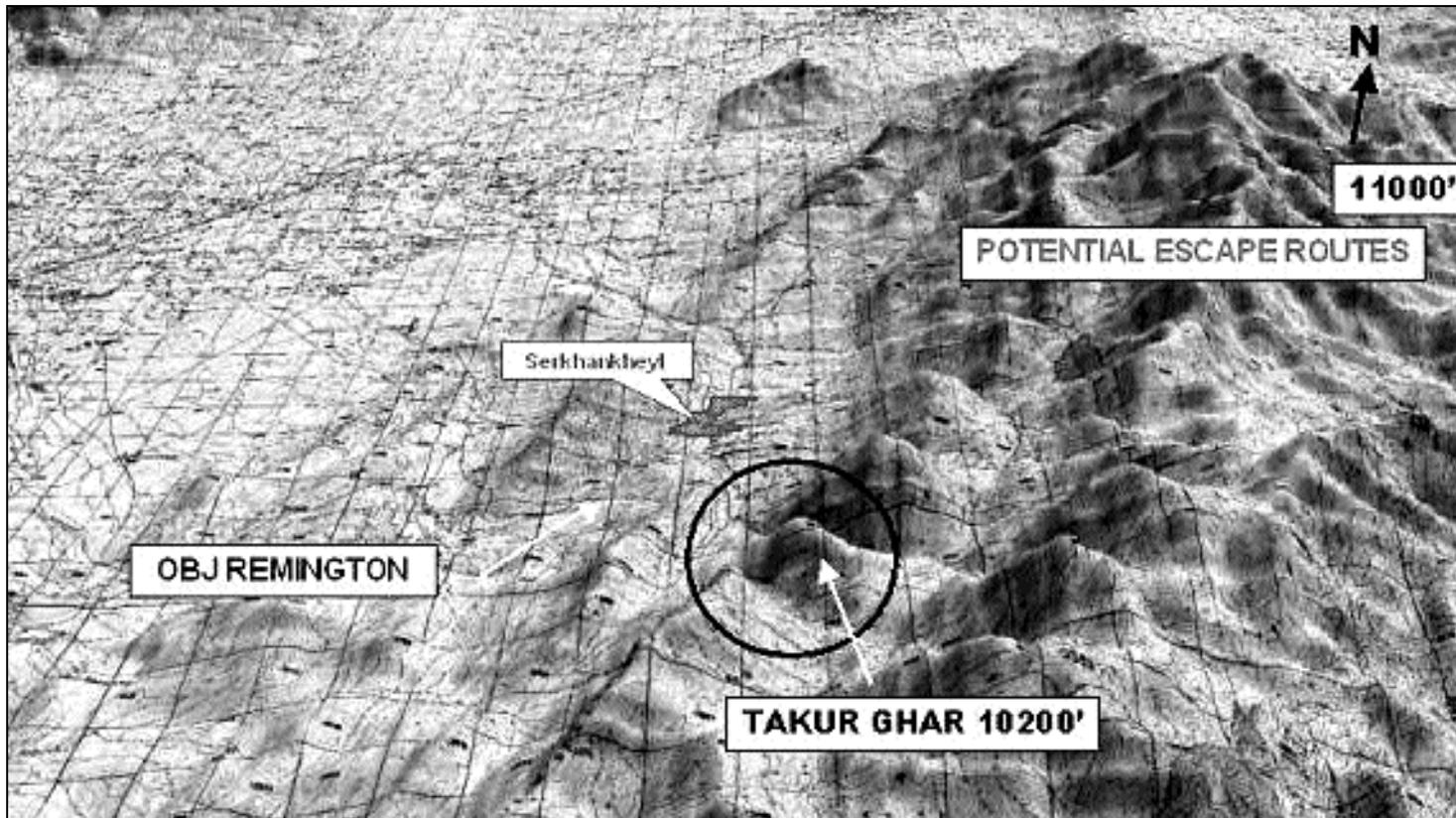
WASHINGTON – The battle on an Afghan mountaintop called Takur Ghar is a story of American courage and bravery. It is a story of a small band of highly trained professionals overcoming the fog and friction of war. It is also at heart, a story of Americans service members' unwillingness to leave one of their own behind.

The battle featured special operations forces from all three services. Navy SEALs, Army Rangers and pilots and Air Force combat controllers and pararescuemen fought against entrenched al Qaeda fighters atop a 10,000-foot mountain.

According to an executive summary of the battle, Takur Ghar was the most intense firefight American special operators have been involved in since 18 U.S. Army Rangers were killed in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993.

U.S. commanders of Operation Anaconda wanted to insert special operators on the crest of the mountain. They reasoned the area would serve as a great observation point. "Unfortunately, the enemy thought so too," the battle report stated. Al Qaeda had fighters perfectly positioned to fire on helicopters and troops operating in the valley below.

An MH-47E helicopter with the call sign "Razor 03" was to airlift SEALs and an Air Force combat controller to the mountaintop. As it neared landing, it took intense enemy fire. A rocket-propelled grenade struck the aircraft and machine-gun fire severed hydraulic and oil lines aboard it. The pilot immediately applied power to get out of the area. Petty Officer 1st Class Neil Roberts, a Navy



A Department of Defense map shows the location of the Takur Ghar hilltop where special operations personnel from the Army, Navy and Air Force battled al Qaeda fighters. Seven American servicemen lost their lives.

SEAL, slipped on the fluid and fell five to 10 feet onto the snow below the aircraft.

The helicopter flew out of the area and crash-landed about seven kilometers away. Roberts was alone atop the mountain. "Based on forensic evidence subsequently gathered from the scene, we believe Roberts survived the short fall from the helicopter, likely activated his signaling device, and engaged the enemy with his squad automatic weapon. He was mortally wounded by gunfire as the

(enemy) closed in on him," the report said.

Another helicopter – "Razor 04" – picked up the SEALs and Air Force TSgt. John Chapman – a combat controller – and went in to save Roberts. The helicopter took fire but was able to deliver the team.

The SEALs and Chapman approached the last known area of Roberts, but were fired upon. As they maneuvered, they engaged the al Qaeda fighters and killed several. Chapman was killed and some of the SEALs were wounded.

The SEALs decided to disengage. An Air Force AC-130 gun ship provided covering fire as the SEALs moved down the mountain and requested immediate assistance.

The mission fell to the U.S. Army Ranger Quick Reaction Force based in Gardez. The 23-man team loaded onto two MH-47E helicopters and headed to the area. Communications breakdowns, however, caused the Rangers to believe the SEALs were still atop the mountain, and that is where one helicopter went.

As the chopper came in, al Qaeda fighters shot it down with RPGs and heavy machine-gun fire. Door gunner Army Sgt. Phil Svitak was killed and both pilots wounded. The MH-47E crashed and all aboard struggled to get out. Sgt. Brad Crose and Cpl. Matt Commons survived the initial fire, but were killed as they exited the aircraft. Spc. Marc Anderson was hit and killed while still in the chopper.

Even with the confusion, the Rangers,

the Chinook crewmen and Air Force combat controllers moved to attack the enemy. Once it became apparent that the al Qaeda force on the mountain was too numerous, the group called in close-air support. The combat controllers called in 500-pound bombs within 50 meters of the special operators position.

In the meantime, the other helicopter with the rest of the Quick Reaction Force landed at another location. The Rangers climbed the 2,000 feet up the mountain to the original position and converged with their comrades at the scene around 10:30 a.m.

The linked teams then assaulted the al Qaeda positions. "As the Air Force (combat controller) called in a last air strike on the enemy bunkers and with two machine-guns providing suppression fire, seven Rangers stormed the hill as quickly as they could in the knee-deep snow – shooting and throwing grenades. Within minutes, the Rangers took the hill, killing multiple al Qaeda," the report said.

The Rangers and airmen consolidated their position. But al Qaeda on another ridgeline about 400 meters away fired on the team's makeshift aid station.

Air Force Pararescueman Senior Airman Jason Cunningham was hit and eventually died from his wounds.

The group stayed on the top of Takur Ghar until nightfall as commanders decided the area was too hot for another daylight rescue attempt.

Seven Americans died in the battle, and 11 were wounded.



DoD photo

"Razor 01," an MH-47E Chinook helicopter, sits atop Takur Ghar, the site of a battle between U.S. special operations forces and al Qaeda fighters during Operation Anaconda in March.

# Cadets visit JTF-B to work, train

By 1st Lt. Richard D. Komurek

Public Affairs Officer

Students from West Point visited Soto Cano from May 28 through June 10 to see the joint operations world of JTF-Bravo and experience the culture of Honduras. Five cadets and one instructor came to Soto Cano to conduct research about New Horizons base camp design and to assist in the planning of future base camps for New Horizons exercises.

The visit, part of an academic program called Advanced Individual Academic Development, provides cadets with the opportunity to learn through participation in real-world military missions.

The Soto Cano visit, organized by West Point's Department of Systems Engineering, was comprised of students from multiple academic majors ranging from foreign language studies to systems engineering and political science. The purpose of the diverse group was to examine processes used for the designing and planning of New Horizons base camps in Central America in order to provide recommendations to United States Army South and United States Southern Command about improvements that can be made for future operations.

For the junior and senior cadets and their instructor alike, the chance to apply classroom studies to situations outside of the academic environment was a welcome experience.

"Our visit is going really well. Our purpose is twofold ... to come look at a real-world problem and come up with a solution and to come to a foreign country to learn about another culture," said Maj. Patrick Magras, a West Point instructor from the Department of Systems Engineering.

Though the cadets were not involved in the site selection process for the New Horizons base camp locations in 2003, they visited Belize as part of the site survey team in order to be an integral part of the base camp planning process.

"The site was already selected so we looked at it to assist with the design and layout of the camp, such as the living and working facilities," said Magras. "We'll provide additional input and expertise, much like a consultant helping to develop a product."

In addition to the academic pursuits of research and planning, the cadets also visited the Honduran Air Force Academy at Soto Cano and made trips to San Pe-



Photo by 1st Lt. Richard D. Komurek

**A Honduran Air Force officer gives a West Point cadet and instructor an up-close look at one of the Honduran Air Force's T-27 combat aircraft. In addition to working with JTF-Bravo, the cadets took time to visit the Honduran Air Force Academy and Honduran Air Force facilities at Soto Cano.**

dro Sula, Tegucigalpa and Copan. While visiting with cadets at the Honduran academy, the West Point cadets were surprised to find they had much in common with their Honduran counterparts.

"The whole 4th Class (freshman) system is very similar, their plebes are treated just like our plebes," said 2nd Class Cadet Brian Mitchell. "They have the same problems and the same struggles, it's just a different culture."

The Honduran cadets were also eager to hear about the daily life of their American comrades, asking questions about everything from dormitory room rules to shoe and boot shining techniques.

"I want to know how things are and if we share the same experiences," said Lester Orellana, a freshman Honduran cadet. After some discussion he discovered a big difference between the two academies. "They (West Point cadets) can take naps in the afternoon," Orellana said with a tinge of envy in his voice.

In addition to being in a foreign country, the joint environment of JTF-Bravo was also a new experience for most of the West Point cadets, who are accustomed to their structured military training environment. Before arriving to Soto Cano, most of the cadets knew little about the operations of a joint task force and most had no idea there were American troops stationed in Honduras.

"I love this opportunity, it gives you something to look forward to," said 2nd Class Cadet Patrick Hardin. "We're getting a lot of firsthand experience by seeing the real Army and interacting with the officers here. A week ago we didn't even know this place existed and now we're here seeing people from all branches of service."

Overall, the West Point visit was an uplifting and motivating experience for the officers-in-training and one that has fostered a new relationship with JTF-Bravo that will continue into the future.

## Fort Bragg troops to replace 101st Airborne in Afghanistan

By Staff Sgt. Marcia Triggs

Army News Service

WASHINGTON—About 3,000 soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C., will be deploying to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom beginning this month and continuing throughout the summer.

The XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg commander, Lt. Gen. Dan McNeil, left the country late May and assumed command of the Combined Joint Task Force headquarters in Afghanistan May 31.

The CJTF, a newly created command, will be a subordinate to the U.S. Central Command, which has the responsibility of coordinating U.S. military action in Afghanistan and keeping Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld abreast of the conflict.

The 82nd's brigade combat team, "Task Force Panther," will consist primarily of elements from the 3rd Brigade, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. It will deploy to Central Asia to replace a brigade from the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), "Task Force Rakkasan," from Fort Campbell, Ky.

"My soldiers are exceptionally ready and exceptionally motivated," said Lt. Col. Martin P. Schweitzer, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 505th PIR.

In preparation for the operation, skills such as nuclear, biological and chemical

protection, as well as communications, have been refined, Schweitzer said.

The airborne brigade task force will be headquartered out of Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, and will continue the primary mission of conducting combat operations to destroy remaining terrorist elements, Army officials said. The unit will also provide site security, collect and exploit intelligence, process detainees, and assist with humanitarian relief to the people in the region, officials added.

The deployment is expected to last six months. However, mission requirements could dictate a longer or shorter duration, officials said. The 101st deployed to support Operation Enduring Freedom in January.

"The 101st brigade has done a tremendous job combating terrorism in Afghanistan," an XVIII Airborne Corps news release stated. "The rotation in forces ... will give the 101st a much-deserved break, a chance to spend some time with family and the opportunity to refocus and prepare for future operations."

It is not known how many other rotations will occur, officials said.

"The U.S. remains committed to Afghanistan until we complete our mission to rid the country of terrorists and set conditions so terrorists don't return," the release continued. "We are not an occupying force. We will leave Afghanistan when we have achieved our objectives."

The creation of the CJTF is also not an indication that the United States will be in Afghanistan indefinitely, officials said.

**Dressed for speed...**

Photo by Spc. M. William Petersen

CW2 Chad Baker and Staff Sgt. John Wescott demonstrate the finer point of tricycle drag-racing at 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment's Dining-In

June 7. The Winged Warriors gathered at La Fonda Colonial Restaurant for a night of fine dining, "grog," and unit hijinx.

# Stop-Loss 4 releases some soldiers, adds others to list

By Joe Burlas

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — The Army announced June 6 a fourth increment to the Stop-Loss program that allows it to retain soldiers in certain specialties beyond their date of separation or retirement for an open-ended period.

While the new call will keep about 260 soldiers on active duty who had potential separation or retirement dates between now and Sept. 30, it releases another 370 who had been impacted by previous Stop-Loss decisions.

Stop-Loss continues to retain about 12,000 active, Reserve and National Guard soldiers.

"Stop-Loss is necessary to retain the critical skills needed in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle," said Lt. Col. Bob Ortiz, chief of Enlisted Professional Development, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G1. "The key word is critical. These are skills where we have found a need to retain soldiers to support a myriad of operational requirements since Sept. 11th."

Stop-Loss has expanded to include the following officer specialties:

- 30 Information Operations
- 34 Strategic Intelligence
- 53 Information

The following enlisted military occupational specialties have been added to the program:

- 13C Field Artillery Automated Fire Support Specialist
- 13D Field Artillery Tactical Data Systems Specialist
- 13E Cannon Fire Direction Specialist
- 14E Patriot Fire Control Specialist
- 52E Prime Power Production Specialist

- 55D Explosive Ordnance Disposal Specialist
- 96U Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operator

•The announcement released officers with a 48E Foreign Area Officer (EURASIA) specialty from the program.

Enlisted soldiers released from previous Stop-Loss announcements include the follow MOSs:

- 81T Topographic Analyst
- 92R Rigger
- 96D Imagery Analyst
- 96H Common Ground Station Operator
- 96Z Intelligence Senior NCO
- 97L Translator (Russian and Spanish Linguist in the Ready Reserve only)
- 97Z Senior Human Intelligence NCO
- 98G Cryptologic Linguist (Russian and Spanish Linguist only)
- 98H Communications Interceptor
- 98J Electronic Intelligence Analyst
- 98K Signal Collection Analyst
- 98Z Senior Signal Intelligence NCO

No warrant officer specialties were added or released by the most recent announcement.

The first Stop-Loss announcement was made Nov. 30. It was directed at active-duty Special Forces and certain aviation soldiers. The second and third announcements, made Dec. 27 and Feb. 8 respectively, expanded the program to additional specialties and included the reserve component.

Stop-Loss does not impact involuntary separations or mandatory retirements.

The Army will continue to evaluate Stop-Loss requirements on a monthly basis, Ortiz said.

## Physical fitness - a way of life

By Robin Gonzalez

MWR Manager

Being physically fit is both an internal and external process and can be achieved in a variety of ways. Here are a few ideas and suggestions that may help you get the most from your individual fitness program.

- Determine your long-term goals and motivation for reaching them. Once you have determined what it is you want to achieve – being honest and realistic – write the goals down and post them where you can see them on a regular basis. Then periodically review the goals and adjust them as needed.

- Do what you love. There are so many options available to you here on Soto Cano. Try something you either have not done in a long time or never done before; it might be "just what the doctor ordered".

- Make sure your warm-up routine does not get overlooked. Warming up the muscles is an important part of the workout process and sets the tone for the entire exercise session.

- Be bad! It is important to reward yourself periodically. So you are good all week and have pizza for dinner or chocolate ice cream for dessert on Friday night. This does not mean an entire medium pepperoni and mushroom pizza or all of the Hagen Daz triple chocolate ice cream container at one sitting. It means rewarding yourself for maintaining a balanced life style. (Besides, a little pizza and Hagen Daz is good for you!)

- Relax and enjoy the workout. If you are mentally stressed it can adversely impact the effectiveness of the work out. Leave your cares at the Fitness Center door and just concentrate on the fitness routine. You may be surprised how the stress disappears along the way.

- Buddy up. Remember the adage "misery loves company." Not only is having a buddy a safety requirement, but it also exercising with a friend means enhanced motivation with positive results.

- Listen to what your body tells you – it just may prevent an injury.

- Morning workouts are the best; you will miss fewer workouts, burn more body fat, and your day will be more productive. Because of the average daily temperature here in Honduras, mornings are cooler and therefore you are less likely to have heat related injuries or illnesses.

- Eat healthy and drink plenty of water. (Remember to be BAD occasionally!)

- Establish bench marks so you can gauge your fitness progress and stay motivated.

Bottom line – eat well, exercise smart, and live life to the fullest.

# U.S. troops reshape life on Philippine island

Story and Photos by Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

**BASILAN ISLAND**—Basilan Island before: a lawless fiefdom of terrorist groups and thugs. One of the groups, Abu Sayyaf, is affiliated with Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda terrorist network.

The terrorists kidnapped people for ransom and killed anyone who tried to improve the lives of the 350,000 residents of the heavily jungled island, in the southern part of the country.

The terrorists destroyed bridges and prevented work on roads. Even if roads were open, islanders were afraid to use them. Residents of the small villages kept to themselves. There was no safe drinking water and no medical attention.

There was no airstrip and the piers were rotting. Farmers who could grow crops had few ways to get them to market off the island and had little incentive to try. Abu Sayyaf and other groups would simply rob them.

"This place was hell," said Ernesto, a local leader who did not want to use his last name.

Basilan after: that is, after the arrival of U.S. troops who've been training and assisting Philippine military forces striving against the terrorists. Residents say they feel more secure. Business activity is picking up, in part because of the United States' spending money on facilities on the island, but more because people believe it is safer.

Most important, the Philippine forces are becoming more effective and have driven Abu Sayyaf to ground, said Air Force Brig. Gen. Donald Wurster, commander of Joint Task Force 510.

Most of the 1,000 U.S. military personnel involved in the mission arrived in January. The 1st Special Forces Group in Okinawa, Japan, is directly involved with the train-and-assist effort.

The rest of the contingent includes Navy Seabees, Marine Corps engineers, Air Force search and rescue personnel from the 33rd Expeditionary Recovery Squadron at Mactan Air Base about 250 miles away, and Army helicopter crews of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, who ferry troops and supplies between Mactan and Zamboanga Island, a stone's throw from Basilan.

Wurster, who also commands Special Operations, Pacific, talks about "severing the links" between the people and the terrorists. Information is key to any such

operation. U.S. forces didn't storm the beach with weapons blazing when they arrived on Basilan, but rather worked with Philippine officials to survey the island population.

Surveyors asked residents how they felt about their government and what facilities they needed. They also charted where the danger areas were and the best ways to approach people living in those areas.

The survey found that islanders have much more confidence in the Philippine military than the government or even their own police.

"This isn't a situation like Indonesia on East Timor," said Air Force Maj. Richard Sater, Task Force 510 spokesman. "The military has no record of human rights abuses and is generally respected."

In the survey, the government was seen as ineffective because it couldn't provide some basic necessities such as clean water and sewage disposal.

"Two kids a day die on Basilan because of bad water," Wurster said. "There is no medical care on the island because (Abu Sayyaf) targets health care providers. They either kidnap them or kill them."

The roads and ports are atrocious. Wurster and U.S. military engineers pointed to a bridge that has been repeatedly built and destroyed. The government would fix the bridge and Abu Sayyaf would destroy it.

"It's in the terrorists' interests to isolate the people of the island," said Wurster.

So, Philippine and American military officials used the survey results to form a plan. At its heart is the idea that the people of Basilan had to see that the government in Manila was effective and could see to their needs.

"The idea of this plan wasn't to get the people to like American soldiers, it's to have the people of Basilan like the government in Manila," Wurster said.

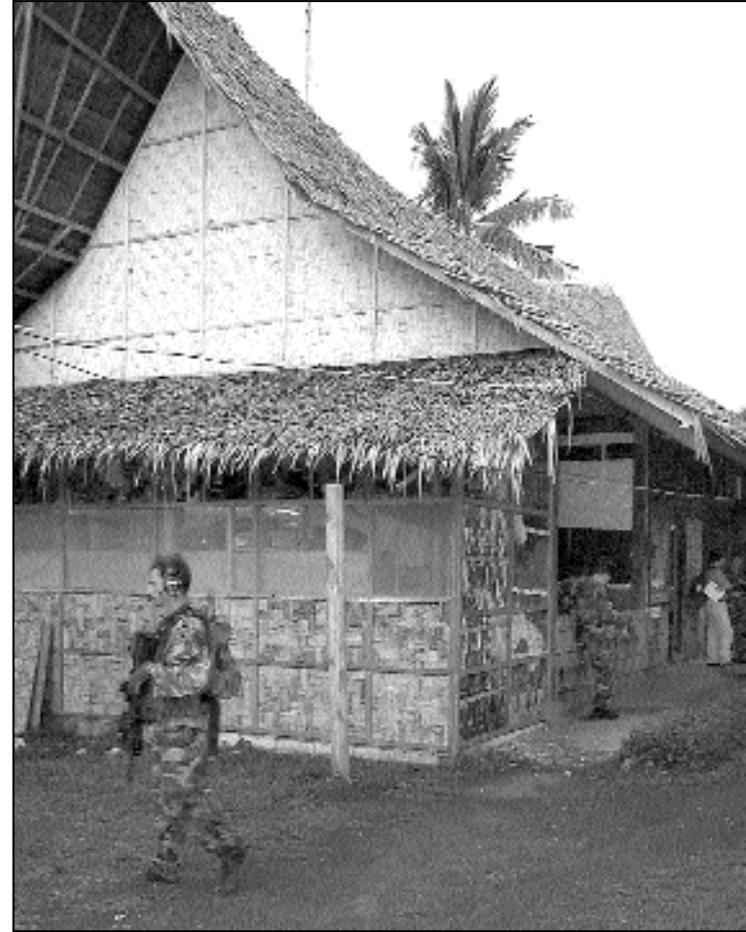
People have to see it's better to be affiliated with the government than with terrorist groups. Wurster estimated that a cell of 20 terrorists needs 200 dedicated supporters to operate and another 2,000 people who are aware of the cell and passively support of it.

JTF 510 planners said the terrorist footprint on Basilan is large enough for people to see and report — if they feel confident their government is effective and will protect them.

The military aspect of the U.S. mission is the Special Forces training and help rendered to the 103rd Brigade of the Philippine military's Southern Command. Headquartered on Basilan, the brigade's job is to go after Abu Sayyaf and other terror groups, said Army Maj. Jeff Prough, commander of a Special Forces company on the island.

The Special Forces soldiers teach light infantry skills such as marksmanship, patrolling and intelligence gathering.

"The Philippine soldiers are good. They are especially at home in the jungle, but we can help them with tac-



**A U.S. service member patrols outside a Nipa hut on Basilan Island, the Philippines, during Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz's trip to the island June 3, 2002. Wolfowitz was assessing the progress made in training and assisting Philippine forces in their fight against terrorism in the region.**

tics, and we do," said Army Maj. Les Brown, another Special Forces commander on the island. He said the soldiers have made progress and that their fire discipline and movement to contact are now first-rate.

U.S. soldiers are also working on training junior NCOs and teaching combat lifesaver programs. "Well-trained NCOs are crucial to anything a unit does," said Army Capt. Mike Lazich, an A-team commander. "Combat lifesaving gives the soldiers confidence that if something happens to them, they can get help."

Right now, the train-and-assist effort stops at the battalion level and is due to end in July.

The American soldiers on the island want to move into Phase II training, under which Special Forces members would work with Filipinos at the lower, more intimate company level. The U.S. personnel are limited to battalion-level work, however, because of the Philippine government's concern over U.S. forces serving in the country.

"I believe we've handled this well," Wurster said. "We didn't come in and try to take anything over. All Americans have been very conscious of the concerns of the Philippine government."

The Philippine government has decided to ask the Americans to remain and to move into Phase II, said Secretary of National Security Angelo Reyes. Top American and Philippine officials will make the official decision.

The military assistance is just one portion of the effort. The Naval Construction Task Group is working on a number of projects that will prove the benefits of government cooperation to the people of Basilan. The

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**Basilan leaders greet Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz as he arrives in the Philippines. Wolfowitz met June 3, 2002, with Philippine and U.S. military personnel to assess how U.S. aid is helping Philippine soldiers defeat the Abu Sayyaf terror group.**

## BRIEFS

### Flightline Badges

Flightline badges are controlled items and all personnel must turn in their flightline badges prior to departing Soto Cano. The only agency authorized to receive flightline badges is Base Operations, Bldg D-61, DSN 449-4499. If you are in possession of any returned flightline badges, please return them to Base Ops as soon as possible.

### Departure Fee at Airport

As part of a new Honduran law all personnel will pay the \$25 airport departure fee. Formerly waived for diplomatic passport holders, this fee now applies to everyone and is payable in cash. When on official travel, you can claim reimbursement on your travel voucher.

Commanders are asked to use this information as part of the numbers you will submit for FY03 budget TDY travel requirements.

### Thrift Savings Plan

The Thrift Savings Plan is a retirement savings and investment plan that allows service members to save a portion of their pre-tax pay in a special retirement account. Service members may sign up to participate in the TSP program during the open season from May 15 - July 31. Current TSP participants may also change their contribution types and amounts. For more information contact the Finance Office at ext. 4282.

### I.M.P.A.C. Training

I.M.P.A.C. Training for new/current cardholders and billing officials will take place at the Education Center Conference Room, Building H-73, June 28. The training will include the Armed Force Government-Wide Purchase Card Program directives, followed by the internal JTF-B procedures (SOP, IMPAC Forms). Length of training is approximately 4 Hours. Training will run from 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.

Carholders must attend the class along with their billing official.

Seats will be reserved by submitting to the Chief of Contracting a memorandum available from the Contracting Office. Cardholders are asked to process their Funding Documents, (DA 3953 Purchase Request and Commitment,) beforehand.

Just the people who reserved their seat up front will attend the training. Make sure you make reservations as space is limited.

Reminder: Attendees must bring the DA 3953 to the training.

# British defense minister: attacks on U.S., British fliers in Iraq increasing

By Sgt. 1st Class Kathleen T. Rhem  
American Forces Press Service

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Iraqi forces have resumed stepped-up attacks on U.S. and British fliers enforcing the northern and southern no-fly zones in that country, the British defense minister told American reporters today.

Accompanying Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld from London for meetings here with other NATO defense ministers, Geoffrey Hoon spoke to reporters traveling with Rumsfeld.

"Immediately after Sept. 11, there was a fall-off of incidences over the no-fly zone. We judged that the regime in Iraq seemed to have gotten the message that military action would follow if they were not very, very careful," Hoon said. "In more recent times, there has been an increase in the number of attacks on aircraft."

He said it's important for the international community to "set out very clearly to the Iraqi regime the importance of accepting U.N. Security Council resolutions regarding weapons inspectors."

After the 1990-1991 Gulf War, the

Security Council ordered Iraq to allow international inspectors to verify the country was no longer producing weapons of mass destruction.

Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein balked in October 1997 and dismantled the program through most of 1998 by expelling U.N. inspectors and ending cooperation.

There have been no inspections in the four years since. U.N. and Iraqi officials have been negotiating a restored inspection regime since March 2002.

Rumsfeld said earlier today in a London press conference with Hoon that Iraq is surely still developing such weapons and poses a threat to its neighbors.

"We know that the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq has had a sizable appetite for weapons of mass destruction. We know the borders into that country are quite porous," Rumsfeld said, noting that both illicit materials and legal materials with both military and civilian uses flow into Iraq regularly.

There is not a doubt in the world that Iraq's programs mature by a month with every month that passes, he said. "That is not ... a happy



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Kathleen T. Rhem

Hoon and Rumsfeld address the press in London regarding Iraq.

prospect for that region," Rumsfeld said. "This is an individual who has used chemical weapons on his own people, so there's not any great debate about what he and his regime are willing to do with weapons of mass destruction."

"Certainly we both believe that Iraq will be a much better place, not only for the region, but for its own people if Saddam Hussein was no longer in power in Iraq," Hoon said.

## BASILAN

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group, made up of the Seabees and Marine Corps engineers, has drilled one well and will drill four others in various parts of the island.

U.S. and Philippine forces need quick, all-weather access all over the island. The engineer group is building or repairing the roads. One aspect of this, said Wurster, is that the group has consciously decided to buy supplies locally. The group bought 30,000 cubic meters of aggregate for the road — all broken up by hand and enough to fill 6,000 dump trucks.

U.S. forces on the island need resupply via air. Now there are few helicopter landing zones and there is no airstrip. The Navy group is rehabilitating an airstrip first built by the Seabees in 1946. They hope to have it cleared for use by C-130s. The airport then, of course, could be used by civilian craft as well.

Air resupply is expensive. The engineers are working on fixing or building piers and jetties. While this will resupply American on the island, the new jetties will also allow Basilan's farmers and businessmen to ship goods to and from the island.

The island's education system stopped working because Abu Sayyaf targeted teachers, principals and anyone else who tried to keep it running, said Army Capt. Rick Myskey, a civil affairs specialist. Because the terrorists targeted many Catholic schools, the situation took on a religious edge that previously hadn't really existed.

"Until recently, there hadn't been a graduation exercise on the island in five years," Myskey said. That graduation exercise occurred because a Special Forces soldier volunteered to help teach at a nearby school, he said. The soldier's interest and the help of the rest of the A-team made the area secure. Children flocked to the school.

Finally, the group, in conjunction with the Special

Forces units on the island, is providing much needed medical care to the civilians. A little money goes a long way, Myskey said. Philippine army doctors and U.S. specialists are now holding "sick call" for civilians.

"It's been a great success," Myskey said. "Many of the communities had absolutely no medical care because of the terrorist situation. In fact, only the (U.S. Agency for International Development) will come into the area because it is so dangerous." The captain said they are also receiving medical supplies from the Christian Children's Fund.

The medical outreach has tremendous potential for the Philippine government. Myskey said that when the Americans and Philippine troops first started going into certain areas, many of the people made slashing movements at their throats.

Today, waves and smiles have replaced the slash, with SF commander Prough noting his soldiers "feel like rock stars" now when they drive through some areas.

But Prough and all the others on the island realize they've just scratched the surface of the problems facing Basilan.

"This is a poor, poor island," said Inocente Gonzalez, a government bookkeeper. "It will take more than six months to make a (lasting) difference."

Another man said the situation on Basilan had improved dramatically, but he is afraid of what will happen if the Americans leave. The Philippine army has sharply curtailed Abu Sayyaf's activities, but the terrorist leaders are still at large. No one thinks they've seen the light and become peaceful.

The Philippine military will continue to keep pressure on the terrorist groups in the Philippines, Secretary Reyes said. American help would make the effort more effective.

"I see no reason why it couldn't continue," he said.

# Expect sudden downpours...

## Army aviators train Honduran air force in Bambi Bucket operations

Story and Photos by Spc. M. William Petersen

Editor

The weather forecast for Soto Cano had called for some scattered showers in the afternoon. It didn't mention anything about sudden, isolated downpours.

But that was what happened when U.S. Army Aviation personnel helped to train Honduran air force aviators in the use of the Bambi Bucket.

The Bambi Bucket is essentially a large, flexible bucket that attaches as a sling load underneath a helicopter to help fight fires. Usually a Bambi Bucket is meant to contain or control a fire; it's relatively small volume of water would only extinguish small blazes. The bucket the Honduran air force trained with can hold more than 2,000 pounds of water.

CW4 Valentino A. Asuncion, Senior Instructor Pilot for 1st Battalion, 228th Aviation Regiment, and Spc. Huey Phelps, a 1-228th crew chief, were both experienced with the Bambi Bucket, and provided the Hondurans with their knowledge.

Spending much of the training time in the classroom, the Hondurans were instructed in firefighting techniques, hook-up and release procedures, emergency procedures, safety concerns and limitations.

While aviators around the world have a lot in common, Asuncion found that there were still hurdles to clear in the instruction.

"A lot of the leadership spoke English, so we were able to communicate the information to them," said Asuncion. "Because of the cultural differences and language barrier, we took extra effort to make sure the lessons and safety issues were well understood."

After two or three trips, the Honduran aviators were ready to try it for themselves, said Asuncion. Flying to Soto Cano Air Base in their Bell 212 helicopter (basically a twin-engine, four-bladed UH-1 Huey,) they hooked up the Bambi Bucket and gave it a test run.

Laying on their stomachs, heads out the door, the crew chiefs communicated to the pilots and guided them down to fill up their bucket. Pulling water from a nearby pond, the aircrew made several passes over a field near the airstrip, dropping thousands of gallons of water each trip.

By the end of the afternoon, they had the procedure down. They were ready to return home and train their comrades.

The Bambi Bucket training was the first joint training between Honduran and American aviators.

"We do a lot of joint operations with the Hondurans, like the multinational airborne jumps," Asuncion said. "But 1-228th hasn't trained in aviation with Hondurans before."



Top: A Honduran Bell 212 drops hundreds of gallons of water onto the fields near Soto Cano's airstrip.

Above: The Bell 212's crew chief keeps an eye on the bucket swinging below the aircraft. Left: CW4 Valentino A. Asuncion(right,) Senior Instructor Pilot for 1-228th, gives some tips on how to fly with a slingload of 2,000 lbs. of water.

